

**Executive Officer's Statement**  
**California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board**

**December 17, 2004**

**Franchise Tax Board Collects More Than \$2 Million in Outstanding Restitution**

The Board's collaboration with the California Department of Corrections (CDC) and the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) Court-Ordered Debt Collection Program has successfully completed its first year this month. FTB has collected more than \$2.2 million in outstanding restitution fine debt from discharged parolees since the program started in January 2004. For its efforts, FTB retains a 15 percent administrative fee and remits the remainder to the Board.

**Board Pilots New Application Review Team**

The Victim Compensation Program (Program) began piloting a centralized data entry unit, known as the Application Review Team (ART), on November 22. The ART uses data entry screens simulating the new automated claims processing system, which is in development. These simulation screens provide the look and feel of the new system while allowing staff to fine-tune screens to be used in the new system.

The Board expects to centralize more data entry work during the next several months, and once the new automated claims processing system is fully implemented, it is expected that the ART will handle all data entry activities. The "new" centralized intake unit will provide increased customer service, improved application processing time, and greater efficiency in the overall claim process.

**Office of Emergency Services Workgroup Created**

In early November, Executive Officer Karen McGagin met with Scott Frizzie, Deputy Director of the Criminal Justice Programs Division at the Office of Emergency Services (OES), to discuss issues that affect both departments' victims' programs. At the meeting, they agreed that regular meetings between the two agencies would be helpful to keep informed of developments affecting victims' programs. As a result, a working group has been formed and an initial meeting was held on December 2. Ted Boughton, Deputy Executive Officer for the Victim Compensation Program, will represent the Board on the working group. It is hoped that these meetings will facilitate collaboration between the two departments to better serve victims and coordinate programs.

**Board Staff Reappointed to Working Group to Enhance Collections**

Mandated by SB 940, Statutes of 2003, the Judicial Council's Collaborative Court-County Working Group on Enhanced Collections (Working Group) began meeting in November 2003. The Working Group's charter calls for the development of comprehensive guidelines for the collection of unpaid fees, fines, forfeitures, penalties, and assessments. The Judicial Council adopted a series of recommendations by the Working Group on August 27, 2004. The Judicial Council also approved reappointment of the Working Group for another year to implement the adopted standards and guidelines, and to work with courts and counties to establish/enhance collection programs. Chief Justice Ronald George appointed the members, including Board staff from the Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division. The reappointed Working Group first met by conference call on November 9. The next meeting will be held January 19 in Sacramento.

### **Study Findings Support Criminal Restitution Compacts**

During the last legislative session, the Legislature questioned the cost effectiveness of the Board's Criminal Restitution Compact (CRC) contracts. In response to a request from the Senate Budget Committee, the Board undertook a pilot study to determine whether there is a cost-benefit for the Board to fund restitution specialist positions through the CRCs to obtain restitution on behalf of the Board.

In October 2004, Board staff surveyed criminal disposition data in five CRC counties and five non-CRC counties to obtain restitution imposition statistics. The data obtained through the on-site surveys overwhelmingly supports the effectiveness of the CRCs in obtaining restitution for the Board. Below is a summary of the findings.

- In the CRC counties, the courts imposed restitution orders in 77 percent of the cases versus 8 percent of the cases in non-CRC counties.
- The courts imposed restitution fines in 90 percent of the cases in CRC counties versus 74 percent of the cases in non-CRC counties.
- The CRC specialists were instrumental in recommending that the restitution fine be commensurate with the seriousness of the crime as allowed by statute. The average fine amount in the CRC counties was \$3,312.46 versus \$1,865.93 in non-CRC counties.
- In the CRC counties, the courts imposed the parole revocation fine in every case where an offender was sentenced to state prison versus 17 percent of the cases in non-CRC counties.
- Of the total restitution orders collected by the 10 counties over a four-year period, the CRC counties collected 88 percent. This data supports the Board's argument that the CRC specialists' role in obtaining restitution orders is an essential first step toward the counties' collection activities. If the courts do not impose the restitution, the counties cannot collect it.